

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION

COVER SHEET

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Title of Invention: **Landscape and Agricultural Sprayer Foam Marking Attachment**

## **TITLE OF THE INVENTION**

### **Landscape and Agricultural Sprayer Foam Marking Attachment**

## **CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

None

5      **I. Background of the Invention**

1. Field of Invention

A foam marking attachment to a lawn and garden tractor or tractor mounted agricultural implement spray apparatus attaches to a low voltage DC power supply of the tractor, applying a left or right side droplet of liquid marking foam to the outer edge of a traveled path, marking the traveled 10 edge of application of a liquid spray from the spray apparatus, preventing over application to an area to be treated with the liquid spray and preventing non-application of the liquid spray the area to be treated with the liquid spray. The attachment may be used when applying liquid fertilizer, pesticide or herbicide to a golf course, yard, field, garden plot or other landscape area, and is used in place of colored spray or dyes which discolor the treated area and may be transferred to person, other objects 15 or clothing. Primary use may be for golf courses and yards where people, clothing and pets often become discolored for an extended period after application of the currently used dyes and colored sprays, which are difficult to remove from skin, hair and clothing.

2. Description of Prior Art

The following United States patents were discovered and are disclosed within this application 20 for utility patent. All relate to foam marking devices applied to implements and used for agricultural and horticultural purposes.

In U.S. Patent No. 6,651,908 to Borglum, a foam marking device comprises a first tank for

containing a foam solution, and a second tank or tube mounted within the first tank, the first tank having a cap on the upper end, and the tube or second tank has a elongated slot along the tank or tube allowing the foam solution to enter the tube, evening the level of fluid in the first and second tanks, wherein an airstream is passed through a porous element in the bottom of the tube to generated 5 bubbles passing upward in the tube above the solution level, passing the bubbles into a foam line exiting the first tank to be dispensed at a location. A second porous element is located at the end of the foam line to homogenize the exiting foam bubbles.

Another foaming liquid dispensing device is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,308,866 to Hoang, wherein a reservoir containing a foamable liquid with a closed headspace above the liquid 10 surface. A gas source disposes an air pressure into the close headspace. A mixing chamber having an inside diameter and an inlet and an outlet open to the outside air with a flow restricter having a plurality of openings in gaseous communication with the closed headspace. An air pump as the gas source introduces air into the headspace generating bubbles which flow through a filter into the outlet where the generated foam is dispensed.

15 In U.S. Patent No. 5,031,834, a marking foam system is disclosed having a connection to a power source to a compressor on/off switch, a solenoid control and a directional valve, an air compressor to generate compressed air which is directed through an air line having a check valve to a foam tube, a liquid foam material in a reservoir also directed through a liquid line by a liquid pump to the solenoid which further directs the foam material to the foam tube where the air and 20 liquid are mixed producing a foam which is thus directed to yet another solenoid which may allow flow of the foam to a right or left dispensing tube to a dispensing nozzle.

Yet another foam marking system is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,314,996 to Borglum

which again connects to a power source, the system disclosing the power being direct to a master control which activates a fresh water pump, a slave control which activates a concentrate pump, and to an air compressor, further comprising a concentrate reservoir containing a foam concentrate directed through the concentrate pump to a mixing chamber, a fresh water reservoir containing fresh water directed through the fresh water pump to the mixing chamber, the mixing chamber then directed the mixed foam liquid to a foam head, which is further connected to the air compressor via an air line, where the mixed foam liquid and air combine in one or more foam generating chambers to form foam which is dispensed to one or more outlets.

The above disclosed systems all provide a much more complicated configuration for generating and dispensing a marking foam at a margin of sprayer application. The current invention simply comprising a three way switch connected to DC power supply, two small air compressors being connected to the three way switch designated as left compressor and right compressor, each compressor connected by an air line with a regulator and a check valve to a left or right foam header having a bottle engaging cap attached to a left or right bottle containing a foam generating solution, each cap having an inlet connector attached to the air line, the inlet connector further directed to a central air tube extending to a bottom of each bottle, the cap also having an outlet connector opening into a headspace above the foam generating solution, further connected to a left or right foam line which extends to a left or right end of a sprayer boom used to apply liquid spray materials for agricultural and horticultural use. When the three way switch activates the right compressor, air is generated by the right air compressor and supplied to the right bottle of foam generated solution through the right foam header, producing foam to the right foam line to the right end of the boom. The when the three way switch activates the left compressor, air is generated by the left air

compressor and supplied to the left bottle of foam generating solution through the left foam header, producing foam to the left foam line to the left end of the boom. The operator may select which side margin is to be marked during the spray application.

## II. Summary of the Invention

5           Foam dispensing device used in conjunction with boom arm sprayers on farm and garden tractor sprayers is well known in the prior art. Most of the prior art system employ water tanks, foam solution tanks, solenoid valves, secondary mixing chambers or foam tubes and complex electrical systems operating series of valves, switches and air generating units.

10          A simple component system which provides the same foam marking capability with much fewer operational and power requiring components is desired for yards, gardens, golf courses and acreages which is easily adapted to liquid spray application devices on the farm and garden tractor during application of fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides or even during seeding, if the present invention is applied to a drill or seeder.

15          The primary objective of the invention is to provide a foam marking device for lawns, gardens, golf courses and acreages which requires simple installation and low component requirements.

             A secondary objective is to provide the device with simple interchangeable premixed bottles of foam marking solution which is changed by simply unscrewing a foam header from the bottle and attaching a new full bottle of the solution to the header.

20          A third objective is to provide the device select either the right side marking or left side marking with the simple throw of a three way switch, with the right side components segregated from the left side components.

### III. Description of the Drawings

The following drawings are submitted with this utility patent application.

Figure 1 is an upper perspective view of the attachment device on a farm or garden tractor with a boom sprayer apparatus.

5 Figure 2 is a view of the attachment device with the boom sprayer apparatus and part of the farm and garden tractor.

Figure 3 is a cross sectional view of the foam header and the foaming solution bottle.

Figure 4 is a component schematic diagram of the attachment device.

### IV. Description of the Preferred Embodiment

10 A foam marking attachment device **10**, shown in FIGS. 1-4, attaches to a chemical boom sprayer apparatus **150** having a right arm **152** and a left arm **154**, the sprayer apparatus **150** mounted on a farm or garden tractor **100** operating on a low voltage DC electrical system **110**, to mark a right or left outer boundary of a treated area of the sprayer apparatus **150**, said attachment device **10** comprising essentially a three way power switch **20** attached to the low voltage DC electrical system **110** of the farm or garden tractor **100**, two low voltage DC air compressors **30a**, **30b** attached to the three way power switch **20** by low voltage electrical wiring **24**, the two air compressors **30a**, **30b** provided as a right air compressor **30a** and a left air compressor **30b**, each air compressor **30a**, **30b** giving rise to a respective right air line **30a** and left air line **30b**, each air line **30a**, **30b** having a check valve **42a**, **42b** and an air regulator **44a**, **44b**, each air line **30a**, **30b** attaching to a respective foam header **50a**, **50b**, designated as a right foam header **50a** and a left foam header **50b**, each foam header **50a**, **50b** having an inner threaded bottle engaging cap **52a**, **52b**, an inlet chuck **52a**, **54b** and an outlet chuck **56a**, **56b**. Each bottle engaging cap **52a**, **52b** is attached to a foaming solution bottle

60 having a bottom 64, each bottle 60 containing a foaming solution 80 with a headspace 82 above the foaming solution 80 within each bottle 60. Each bottle engaging cap 52a, 52b further includes a central tube 58a, 58b extending to the bottom 64 of each bottle 60, the central tube 58a, 58b connecting to the respective inlet chuck 52a, 54b by an inlet channel 55a, 55b in the bottle engaging cap 52a, 52b, with the outlet chuck 56a, 56b connected to an outlet channel 57a, 57b leading to the headspace 82 above the foaming solution 80. The outlet chuck 56a, 56b is further connected to a respective length of foam tubing 70a, 70b which extends along a respective arm 152, 154 of the boom sprayer apparatus 150, each length of foam tubing 70a, 70b having a restricted right angled elbow 72a, 72b connected to a vertical drop tube 74a, 74b, extending below the boom sprayer apparatus 150 to a level slightly above the right or left outer boundary of the ground being treated.

Once attached to the lawn or garden tractor 100 and the boom sprayer apparatus 150, the attachment device 10 is operated by activating the three way switch 20 to operate either the right air compressor 30a or the left air compressor 30b. The activated air compressor 30a, 30b then generates compressed air which is delivered through respective the air line 40a, 40b to the respective foam header 50a, 50b, further directing the air into the respective central tube 58a, 58b of the attached bottle 60, forcing air into the bottom 64 of the bottle 60 into the foaming solution 80, generating a foam 84 which is collected within the headspace 82 above the foaming solution 80. The foam 84 is then eliminated through the respective outlet channel 57a, 57b to the outlet chuck 56a, 56b into the respective length of foam tubing 70a, 70b, the foam 84 being compacted as it travels through the restricted right angle elbow 72a, 72b into the vertical drop tube 74a, 74b, where the compacted foam 84 is deposited upon a ground surface at either the left or right outer boundary of the treated area of the chemical boom sprayer apparatus 150. The lengths of foam tubing 70b associated with the left

air compressor **30b** is attached to the left arm **154** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**, while the length of foam tubing **70a** associated with the right air compressor **30a** is attached to the right arm **152** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**. The operator may select either the right or left boundary, depending on his course of application of a chemical spray product, by moving the three way switch  
5      **20** to activate either the right air compressor **30a**, causing foam **84** to be delivered to the drop tube **74a** corresponding to the right arm **152** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**, or to activate the left air compressor **30b**, causing foam **84** to be delivered to the drop tube **74b** corresponding with the left arm **154** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**.

The chemical spray product may include insecticide, fertilizer, and herbicide, although it is  
10      contemplated within the scope of this attachment, that the attachment may be applied to any lawn or garden tractor **100** being used for the above noted purpose, as well as for mowing, seeding, aerating, plugging or other application involving a farm or garden tractor **100** for which the application of the attachment device **10** would be useful marking the boundary between the treated and untreated areas.

15      When the three way switch **20** activates the right air compressor **30a**, air is generated by the right air compressor **30a** and supplied to the bottle **60** of foaming solution **80** through the right foam header **50a**, producing foam **84** to the right foam tubing **70a** to the right arm **152** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**. The when the three way switch **20** activates the left air compressor **30b**, air is generated by the left air compressor **30b** and supplied to the bottle **60** of foaming solution **80** through  
20      the left foam header **50b**, producing foam **84** to the left foam tubing **70b** to the left arm **154** of the boom sprayer apparatus **150**. The operator may select which side margin is to be marked during the spray application.

Each foaming solution bottle **60** should contain at least two liters of foaming solution **80**, which is a premixed solution of foaming agent and water which is mixed to proportion prior to placement in the bottles **60**. This makes provision of a separate water reservoir, a foaming agent reservoir and a mixing chamber or tube unnecessary by including everything in one bottle. The  
5 action of the compressed air being forced from the bottom **64** of the bottle **60** through the foaming solution **80** is sufficient to generate the foam **84** required of this attachment device **10**, the compressed air being delivered at a desired pressure controlled by the operator by adjustment of the regulators **44a**, **44b** in the air lines **40a**, **40b**. See FIG. 4. The generated foam **84** in the headspace **82** above the foaming solution **80** forces its way out of the outlet channel **57a**, **57b** into the outlet  
10 chuck **56a**, **56b** when sufficient foam is generated to do so. More than two bottles **60** containing foaming solution **80** may be present on the attachment device **10** to prevent time delaying refilling of the bottles **60**, providing a quick change of the bottles **60** during operation of the attachment device **10**. In this case, the device may also include a bottle retainer **66**, FIGS. 1 and 2, to retain  
15 foaming solution bottles **60** in use with the device as well as those foaming solution bottles **60** carried as spares.

The attachment device **10** may further be defined as having quick connect fittings **45a**, **45b** on the air lines **40a**, **40b** beyond the check valve **42a**, **42b** and the regulator **44a**, **44b** allowing for a quick connection of the air line **40a**, **40b** to the inlet chucks **52a**, **54b**. Similarly, the foam tubing **70a**, **70b** may also be connected to the outlet chucks **56r**, **56l** using quick connect fittings **75a**, **75b**,  
20 to provide a quick disconnection and connection of the foam headers **50a**, **50b** from the air lines **40a**, **40b** and foam tubing **70a**, **70b** for cleaning the system after use to remove the foaming solution **80** residue in the foam headers **50a**, **50b**, bottles **60** and foam tubing **70a**, **70b**. See FIG. 3. These quick

connect fittings **45a, 45b, 75a, 75b** may also allow for the air line **40a, 40b** to be connected directly to the foam tubing **75a, 75b** using a quick connect fitting adapter (not shown) to purge the foam tubing **70a, 70b** of residual foam **84** in the foam tubing **70a, 70b** with air. The foam tubing **70a, 70b** should be flexible, which would allow them to remain attached to the boom sprayer apparatus **150**

5 when the boom arms **152, 154** are folded into a stored position after use. Swimming pool hose has been found to be most suitable as the foam tubing **70a, 70b** or otherwise best presented as one inch clear plastic tubing to monitor the flow and quantity of foam being disposed to the vertical drop tubes **74a, 74b**.

Presented in best mode, each of the bottles **60** should be no less than three liter plastic bottles  
10 with a threaded neck **62**, as shown in FIG. 3, adapted to engage the inner threaded bottle engaging caps **52a, 52b**, with an O-ring **59a, 59b** in each bottle engaging cap **52a, 52b** to seal the threaded neck with the bottle engaging caps **52a, 52b**. The quick connect fittings **45a, 45b, 75a, 75b** should be a brass product or other non-corrosive product. The three way power switch **20** would be best installed at or near a control panel **110** on the farm or garden tractor **100**, FIG. 1, for ease of access  
15 by the operator, and is generally provided in a housing **22**, as shown in FIG. 4 of the drawings.

In the event there is a closed compartment **104** on the farm or garden tractor **100**, as indicated in FIG. 2 of the drawings, the air compressors **30a, 30b** would best be installed within that compartment **104** to reduce the noise produced by the air compressors **30a, 30b**, as the air compressors **30a, 30b** are the only tangible noise emitting device in the attachment device **10**. The air lines **40a, 40b** would thus emanate from a lid **106** of the closed compartment **104** to attach to the foam headers **50a, 50b**, the lid generally supporting a spray tank **156** of the boom sprayer apparatus  
20 **150**.

The foam headers **50a**, **50b** should be constructed of a non-corrosive product, which may include stainless steel, nylon, or other non-corrosive metal or plastic, as most foaming solutions have a corrosive character to them over time, which could oxidize other metals or decay non-suitable plastics.

5        Best suited use for the attachment device **10** would be for golf courses and yards where people, clothing and pets often become discolored for an extended period after application of the currently used dyes and colored sprays, which are difficult to remove from skin, hair and clothing.

10      While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

**What is claimed is:**

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